

MEMO

Date: September 1, 2015

To: Bay Trail Steering Committee

From: Maureen Gaffney

Subject: Sonoma County Regional Parks Grant Request—Sears Point Bay Trail Connection Feasibility Study

Background: The Sears Point Bay Trail, a new, 2.5 mile segment of levee-top trail on the shores of San Pablo Bay in rural Sonoma County is currently under construction and is slated to open in early 2015. However, the end of the Sears Point Bay Trail being constructed by Sonoma Land Trust will not connect to existing Bay Trail at the Tubbs Island/Tolay Creek trailhead on eastbound Highway 37, its logical terminus.

This grant request for \$100,000 would fund a feasibility study to evaluate the following, in order of importance as well as increasing complexity:

1. An approximately 900 foot trail connecting the Sears Point Bay Trail—currently under construction—to Highway 37.
2. A new trailhead within Highway right-of-way at the intersection of Highways 37, Highway 121, and Tolay Creek Road, and discussing possible trail connections with the private property owner at Paradise Vineyards.
3. Trail from Highway 37/121 intersection to Tubbs Island and Tolay Creek Trailhead.

The feasibility study will evaluate existing conditions such as right-of-way, Highway 37 traffic, sea level rise, and future plans, outreach to regulatory agencies and stakeholders, resource studies needed to inform trail alignment, and a preliminary design plan with cost estimates. The study will provide a recommended alignment and process for advancing towards construction.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends full funding of this project. The Sears Point Trail with its direct connection to 2.5 miles of existing Bay Trail at Sonoma Baylands, and one mile of existing trail at Port Sonoma Marina make six continuous miles of shoreline Bay Trail in Sonoma County. Addressing the next two gaps—from Sears Point to Highway 37, and from Highway 37 to the Tubbs Island/Tolay Creek Trailhead—is of paramount importance. Once complete, there will be twelve miles of continuous, shoreline Bay Trail in the North Bay.